

ARGENTINA - WILD PATAGONIA OVERLAND



INTRODUCTION

Begin your epic journey in Santiago, the vibrant cosmopolitan capital of Chile before you travel south through the heart of the wine region. En route, take in the natural splendour of the lush green forest and sparkling blue lakes of the Chilean and Argentinean lakes districts. Arriving into the remote Patagonian expanse we explore the southern ice fields, breath-taking glaciers and the magnificent snow-capped Andes mountain range before arriving in Ushuaia, the most southerly city in the world. This is a voyage of intense natural beauty and a chance to be at one with the great outdoors in some of its finest natural states.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Santiago

Your tour begins with a bang in Santiago, Chile's cosmopolitan capital city. Please join your tour leader for a tour meeting at 6:30pm, look out for joining details in the lobby. Enjoy a welcome dinner with the group this evening Meals: Dinner (D)



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LATSWPO

DEPARTURE

16/10/2021, 12/01/2022

DURATION

27 Days

LOCATIONS

Argentina, Chile, Patagonia



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DAY 1: Santiago de Chile

Santiago, Chile's capital and largest city, lies in a valley surrounded by the snow-capped mountains of the Andes and the Chilean Coastal Range. Founded in 1541, Santiago has been Chile's capital since colonial times. It is a vibrant and cosmopolitan city and although it features many colonial buildings, it has grown into a modern metropolis and the cultural centre of the country.



DAY 2: Santiago to Santa Cruz

An early departure from Santiago towards the south via the Panamerican Highway, we arrive into the wine region. Once we arrive you will visit the Colchagua Museum, known today as one the most complete Museums in South America. The Colchagua Valley, famous for producing some of Chile's finest wines, in particular Carmenere, a grape that was thought to be extinct until rediscovered in Chile in 1994. Their Cabernet Sauvignon variety also thrives during the grape growing season due to the hot sunny climate in this part of Chile. During this day, you will visit the winery, with wine tasting and wine making included. Meals: Breakfast (B), Lunch (L), Dinner (D)



DAY 3: Santa Cruz to Pucon

Settle into our comfortable custom-built truck as we journey south along the highway. Passing orchards and plantations of fruits and vegetables, as well as a big timber industry. We'll pass picturesque lakes and mountains to arrive into Pucon, located in the heart of Chile's Lakes District. On the way we will stop for lunch at the impressive Salto del Lajas waterfalls. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 4: Pucon

Today we combine a wonderful natural environment with a cultural experience unique to this area. In the morning, we will visit either the Villarrica National Park or one of the surrounding national reserve parks, all of which protect thousands of hectares of rivers, waterfalls, alpine lakes and forest. In the afternoon, we visit a traditional Mapuche family. We are invited to learn and experience the Ruka of the Mapuche people, the heart of their culture. You will learn about their daily life and gain a wonderful insight into their culture and enjoy a traditional Mapuche meal. Meals: (B), (L)



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DAY 5: Pucon

Enjoy a day at leisure here where it is possible to organise numerous outdoor activities such as a one day hike up the Villarica Volcano to reach the smoking crater or take the bus out to Huerquehue National Park and experience the amazing lakes trail. You could enjoy kayaking, mountain biking, horse riding, fishing, white water rafting and even sky diving, or simply relaxing by the lake admiring the beauty of your surroundings. Meals: (B)



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DAY 6: Pucon to Bariloche

Crossing our first border we pass the gigantic Volcano Lanin (3737m) as we make our way through the Lanin National Park. Once we cross into Argentina you'll see the landscape change. After lunch sit back and marvel along the scenic seven lakes drive to Bariloche, Argentina a resort town nestled peacefully on the shores of the Nahuel Huapi Lake. San Carlos de Bariloche lies on the southern shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi in the foothills of the Andes surrounded by mountains and forests. Its location is stunning, surrounded by the Nahuel Huapi National Park, the oldest National Park in Argentina. With its Alpine-styled architecture, its picturesque lakeside setting overlooked by mountains and forests as well as numerous boutique chocolate shops and St. Bernard dogs, the city has a Swiss-like atmosphere. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 7: Bariloche

A free morning allows you time to head up to Cerro Otto via a gondola where you can sit in the revolving café with a 360 degree view. You can also explore the forest at the top spotting condors and falcons as you go. In the afternoon, we take time to explore the scenic Circuito Chico in the Nahuel Huapi National Park following the road along the lake. We learn about how Bariloche got started, head up the chairlift to Cerro Campanario, stop at various lookout points and discover a hidden lake. We finish off this lovely afternoon at Argentina's most famous resort, Hotel Llao Llao, where we will enjoy High Tea over-looking the lake. Meals: (B), High Tea



DAY 8: Bariloche

A day at leisure here gives you time to pursue interests such as sailing on the massive Nahuel Huapi Lake, horse riding on a local estancia, taking a tour to see the monstrous Tronador peak, playing golf or hiking one of the many trails available in the area. Meals: (B)



DAY 9: Bariloche to Futaleufu

Today we pass through the town of Esquel where the "Old Patagonian Express" still runs. We have a short stop in Trevelin, a small town with links to Welsh immigrants. In the late afternoon, we cross into Chile and the scenery will immediately change as we arrive into the quaint town of Futaleufu. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 10: Futaleufu to Queulat National Park

Today we turn onto the Carretera Austral (Southern Road) a remote, unspoilt region of intense natural beauty and is often referred to as one of South America's best road trips. We stop along the way to take photos and admire the spectacular natural vistas. Wild rivers flow through lush forests, waterfalls tumble along steep cliff faces and the world is reflected in mirror lakes. At lunch time, we arrive at the coastal fishing village of Puyuhuapi, located on the edge of the Chilean Fiords in a setting of incomparable beauty. In the afternoon, we get the rare opportunity to get up close and personal to a spectacular hanging glacier in the Queulat National Park. Enjoy the park's trails while being surrounded by virgin evergreen forests made up by species like coihue, tepa, and Chilean rhubarbs. Tonight we spend the night in cabins located on the edge of the Chilean Fiords. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



DAY 11: Queulat National Park

In such a remote and rugged area, you might just like to snuggle up in your cabin, but today you'll have the opportunity to hike to a nearby waterfall, take navigation to a personally owned island in the fjords or try a little sea kayaking (weather permitting). Meals: (B), (L), (D)



DAY 12: Queulat national park to Coyhaique

Our drive starts with a windy 33 curves, climbing up to 500m/1500ft above sea level. As we venture through two more valleys we pass through several small country towns that were created when building the road access through this rugged area. Following along the Simpson River we pass lush pastures, mirror lakes and snow-capped mountains. We continue onto the Coyhaique Reserve and enjoy a short hike (8km/5mi) to the Lago Verde - Green Lake. It is a short drive from here to Coyhaique town where you can take a walk along the river and enjoy the viewpoints looking across the valley. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 13: Coyhaique - Ruta 40

Today we have a wonderful drive through the Cerro Castillo Reserve with a chance to spot the rare Huemul deer. After lunch, we cross into Argentina and on to the famous Ruta 40 (Route 40). Travelling south through the vast Patagonian plains keep your eyes peeled for armadillos, rheas and guanacos. Tonight, we stop overnight at a remote Patagonian town. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 14: Ruta 40 - Gobernador Gregores

Today we make a special visit to the Cuevas de las Manos (Cave of the Hands) which one of the most important archaeological sites in Patagonia. The caves feature paintings that are the most ancient artistic expressions of the native people of the subcontinent. The paintings were done by the first settlers of these lands, ancestors of the Tehuelche people (or Patagones), and date back to different periods from 9300 to 3300 years ago. The site was declared World Heritage by the UNESCO in 1999. We continue and spend the night in Gobernador Gregores, a small town with links the old caravan trail. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 15: Gobernador Gregores - El Chalten

A morning drive to enjoy the landscapes of the Patagonian Steppe as we head south. Further on we will arrive in El Chalten, and the Parque Nacional Los Glaciares. This ice field is the world's 3rd largest reserve of fresh water. Enjoy lodgings in our hotel nestled quietly under the imposing peaks of Mount Fitzroy, named after the captain of the Beagle, who navigated Darwin's Expedition of the area in 1834. In the afternoon, you will have time to take on one of the short hikes available in the area. You can climb up to the eagle and condor lookout points, stroll along the river to the wonderful Chorrillo waterfall. El Chaltén is a small mountain village that lies within the magnificent World Heritage Listed Parque Nacional Los Glaciares at the base of Cerro Torre and Cerro Fitz Roy mountains. "Chaltén" is a Tehuelche word that means "Smoking Mountain", as they believed that Cerro Fitz Roy was a volcano, its summit enshrouded by clouds. Today El Chaltén is Argentina's trekking capital. The towering granite spires and fissured glaciers of the Torre and Fitzroy groups offer some of the most stunning scenery and spectacular hiking and trekking in southern Patagonia. A network of world-class trails take you to viewpoints with breath-taking vistas including those of Cerro Torre and Cerro Fitzroy peaks. There are also tracks to Torre Glacier, Piedras Blancas Glacier, Laguna Capri, Laguna de los Tres, Chorillo del Salto and the remote Pasa del Viento (Windy Pass). Meals: (B), (D)



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DAY 16: El Chalten

A full day hiking today, we meet our local guides and set off on one of the main hiking trails in the wonderful Los Glaciares National Park, (the Lago Torre* hike is our usual option). Enjoy spectacular scenery and obtain views of the magical Cerro Torre or the wonderful Mount Fitzroy. Keep your eyes peeled to spot regional birds including woodpeckers, caracaras and condors. *The Lago Torre trail takes us first to a wonderful view point with a picture postcard shot of almost the entire mountain range included Cerro Torre and Mount Fitzroy. From this point, we can also see the Margarita Waterfall and the Rio Fitzroy.

Continuing up to a saddleback in the mountain we are gifted with a view of the valley and can easily see the snow-capped Andes range. Descending into the valley and through the high deciduous beech tree forest we hike over an old moraine and finish at Lake Torre which is flanked by the Cerro Torre Glacier. The complete Cerro Torre hike requires a moderate level of fitness and is a full day of hiking. We offer a shorter hiking plan that enables you to still see the stunning surrounding scenery but you would need to do the full extension to see the Cerro Torre Glacier. Meals: (B), (L)



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DAY 17: El Chalten → El Calafate

Spend the morning exploring some of the other great walking trails El Chalten is famous for. This morning we hike up to Laguna Capri, this is the first 6kms (12kms return) of the Laguna de los Tres trail. It is a continuously ascending trail to the laguna but our local guides will maintain a comfortable pace to enable you to enjoy and stop for photos and information. We will navigate our way around the loop of lookout points giving you a spectacular view of the Mount FitzRoy range. You will also be able to see the Piedras Blancas glacier and taken in the flora and fauna of the park. We return back to El Chalten town and regroup back at our hotel. In the mid-afternoon, we will continue by road to El Calafate. Enroute we will stop at a historic homestead saloon with some famous outlaw visitors. We continue through the steppe before seeing the beautiful Lake Argentina, the biggest freshwater lake in Argentina. We arrive into El Calafate, our base to visit the impressive Perito Moreno glacier. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 18: El Calafate

The Perito Moreno Glacier is one of the earth's most dynamic and accessible ice fields. Visiting this glacier, we can witness from a series of walkways huge chunks of ice breaking free from the face of the glacier and crashing with a mighty roar into the water. We set off from town and take the old, unpaved road with no rush and plenty of time for bird and animal spotting. Along the way, we learn about the guachos (cowboys) and life on the estancias before stopping at one of them for a coffee. On our way to the glacier our expert local guide will explain the amazing phenomena that this glacier is famous for and why it is considered stable and not retreating like many other glaciers in the area. If lucky, a highlight is watching and hearing giant chunks of ice plummet into the waters of Lake Argentina. After a few hours of free time to explore the walkways we transfer to the port and enjoy a one-hour boat ride that brings us 300m (1000ft) from the glacier's wall. This is a wonderful way to get close to the glacier and appreciate its daunting size and power. After this amazing encounter, we head back to El Calafate town. Meals: (B), (L)



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DAY 19: El Calafate to Torres del Paine

Head back into Chile to Torres Del Paine, South Americas finest National Park and a trekker's paradise. Declared a Reserve of the Biosphere by UNESCO in 1978 it is located amongst the mountain range of the Andes and the Patagonian steppe. In this zone, the colossal towers and horns of granite and rock that have given world-wide fame to it, with heights of up to 3,050 meters above the sea level. The park preserves fragile ecosystems, numerous animals like guanacos, condors, ñandues (South American ostrich), foxes and the elusive puma. The 3 famous hikes we cover inside the park, these are: (a) Los Torres Hike (b) French Valley Hike (c) Greys Glacier Hike Instead of walking these continuously, carrying all your hiking gear like on the Big W (a 4 day hike), we break it into three separate walks, covering different sections of the park and hiking an average of 15km (9.5mi) to 20km (12mi) each day. The group is assisted by expert local trekking guides who share information about the environment and guide you through the hiking trails. If you are not hiking there are other activities available inside Torres Del Paine including tours be vehicle, boat and on horse-back. However, please note these activities are subject to availability and minimum numbers and will incur an additional cost. Please note activities are weather dependent. Please ask about our Torres Light Add-On. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 20: Las Torres

Las Torres Hike (Difficult) Hiking to view the iconic Las Torres (the Towers) is a challenging yet immensely satisfying hike, a highlight for all experienced trekkers. The Towers are the three massive granite columns that encircle the smaller Torres Glacier. The Towers hike is by far the most strenuous of all the hikes. From the entrance, you have a 1.5km/1mi flat warm up to the start of the trailhead at Hosteria Las Torres. You start off climbing up the side of one of the mountains, all dirt paths and quite steep in gradient in areas. It then flattens out as you scale the side of the valley with a great river underneath you. A short downhill section will bring you to the refugio Chileno. Here you can buy snacks and rest for a while and use the facilities. Although you can see the tips of the towers from the refugio, this hike is fully appreciated when you are able to hike the full length. Once you leave the refugio you start climbing again for about 1 hour crossing rivers and passing through a beautiful forest. The final 45 minutes are quite challenging as you scramble up boulders to the base of the towers. *We offer a fantastic optional day for those unable to attempt the Towers. It involves heading to another section of the park, enjoying a shorter hike and visiting indigenous hand paintings while still having a view of the Towers. Full walk takes approximately 8 - 9 hours return including time for lunch and depending on your ability/physical strength.

Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 21: Torres del Paine

French Valley Hike (Moderate - Difficult) The French Valley is the most beautiful valley in the Torres del Paine National Park. It is a steep hike and offers incredible its unique panoramic views of Los Cuernos del Paine, the French Glacier and Lakes Nordenskjold, Pehoé, Scottsburg and Toro. This walk starts at the same place as the Greys Glacier walk and between the hikes we stay overnight at the Paine Grande Refuge so you do not have to return across the lake to our hotel, effectively allowing you additional time to complete the hikes (please note you will take an overnight bag with you (provided) and your main luggage will be stored for you) This is a very different walk to the Greys Glacier. Slightly longer for the shorter walk and at times the track can be rocky and steep. The entrance to the valley is Italiano Camp (7.5km/4.5mi) and is our short hike stopping point. For those who continue up into the valley to the French Lookout the trail becomes steep with loose gravel and boulders. With a 300m/1000ft elevation gain you have wonderful views of the valley as well as the amazing view of mountains all around. You can sit, watch and hear ice crack and maybe even see a mini avalanche. Full walk takes approximately 8 - 9 hours return including time for lunch and depending on your ability and physical strength. Meals: (B), (L), (D)



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DAY 22: Torres del Paine to Puerto Natales

Greys Glacier trek (Easy - moderate) Grey Glacier is one of the principal tourist attractions located in Chile. As soon as you get to this place you will be breath taken with the lakes creamy blue colour dotted with icebergs floating and the Patagonia Icefield at the back. Initially you will walk through a valley before climbing a steep incline, onto a ridge taking you first through a burnout forest and then into a green live forest. A little further along the trail brings you to an elevated view of Grey Lake. You hike along an exposed ridge line before reaching the Grey Glacier Lookout point. (Approx 2.5hrs) If you are looking for a short hike this would be your turn around point, heading back the same way to the start of the trail. Continuing down another 2 hours further from this point you get to the main Refugio Grey Glacier view point which brings you a lot closer to this magnificent ice sheet. From here you have a magnificent view of the glacier across the water and usually the wonderful blue of the icebergs floating in the lake below. All viewpoints of the glacier are from a front on angle. Full walk takes approximately 7 - 8 hours return including time for lunch and depending on your ability/physical strength. At the conclusion of your full day trekking we will head to our hotel in Puerto Natales. Meals: (B), (L)



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DAY 23: Puerto Natales to Punta Arenas

After a leisurely morning we will head off to Punta Arenas, located on the edge of the Straights of Magallen. Tonight you will enjoy a meal prepared by a talented, local chef who takes local regional foods and gives you a taste of the variety of unusual tastes and flavours they have. Meals: (B), (D)



NO IMAGE
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DAY 24: Punta Arenas to Cerro Sombrero

Enjoy your morning exploring Punta Arenas, a place of historical riches; see the mansions and museums of the wealthy wool barons who lived the high life during the boom of the 1890s or take on the wind as you walk along the beautiful promenade by the water's edge, before crossing the Straits of Magellan onto the island of Tierra del Fuego. Meals: (B), (D)



NO IMAGE
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DAY 25: Cerro Sombrero to Ushuaia

In the morning, we visit a King Penguin colony, they are usually only found on sub Antarctic islands, such as the remote and difficult to access South Georgia and Falkland Islands. Observing them here is a unique opportunity! We cross into Argentina and pass Lago Fagnano before heading over the Garibaldi Pass (500m/1500ft) and into the southernmost city in the world of Ushuaia. Now a major tourist town it is a great base for hiking, winter sports and starting point for many cruises to Antarctica. Meals: (B), (L)



DAY 26: Ushuaia

In the morning, you will embark the catamaran that will take you through the waters of Beagle Channel. Sailing along Ushuaia Bay you get an excellent panoramic view of the city framed by Andean mountains. Passing by Archipelago Bridges you'll reach Birds Island, where you will be able to appreciate the vast variety of sea birds that live in the area: cormorants, skuas, petrels, ducks, sea gulls, etc. Close to this place, you will see the Sea Lions and a unique opportunity to watch at the same time sea lions of two distinct species. You will finally get to Les Eclaireurs Lighthouse, the iconic symbol of the beagle channel before returning to Ushuaia. In the afternoon we visit Tierra Del Fuego National Park where you will be able to enjoy the wonderful natural environment with visits to Ensenada Bay, Alakush Visitors Centre including a small museum learn about the indigenous Yamana, see an old beaver dam and finish at Lapataia Bay, "The End of the Road" where the end of the famous Panamerican Highway is found more than 17000km/11000mi from where it begins. Enjoy a special farewell dinner at one of Ushuaia's great restaurants. Meals: (B), (D)



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DAY 27: Ushuaia - Departure

Depart Ushuaia with wonderful memories, and a new respect of our wonderful planet courtesy of Patagonia. You may depart anytime after breakfast today, please make your own way for onward arrangements. Meals: (B) Note: The information regarding itinerary is given in good faith and is subject to change and /or cancellation, due to weather / political and / or country instabilities and general safety / road conditions etc. Any such changes and/or cancellations which are in our control will be decided by the crew and will be discussed with the group beforehand whenever possible.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Hotels in most locations. Cabins and refuge

Inclusions

22 nights accommodation in standard hotels
3 nights accommodation in comfortable cabins
1 night accommodation in hiking lodge with shared bunk beds and facilities
Transportation in custom built all-terrain expedition vehicles
26 Breakfasts, 18 Lunches, 19 Dinners
Fully escorted in South America
Experienced tour leader as well as local guides
Experienced Driver/Mechanic
All National Park Entrance fees

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

Single Surcharge

Single supplement for guaranteed single room is 25% of the total tour cost. However we offer a willing to share option for all solo travellers where we will pair you with another traveller of the same sex to share a twin room.

Notes

Please note this is a small group tour. However, departures are guaranteed after 2 pax.

Price Dependent upon

Departure date, seasonality and availability.

SUSTAINABILITY

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Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.
- 4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.
- 5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structured to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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